

New York with a Certificate of Recognition presented by Council Member Mathieu Eugene.

#### HONORING AUBRI ESTERS

##### HON. AYANNA PRESSLEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Ms. PRESSLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to join me in honoring and celebrating the life of Ms. Aubri Esters, an outspoken and beloved activist.

Aubri was a voice for the unheard. She was unabashed in sharing her story and her lived experiences to advocate for the wellbeing of those most marginalized, including other transgender individuals, people with disabilities, people with substance use disorders, and trauma survivors.

In addition to serving on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Harm Reduction Commission, Aubri co-founded the organization SIFMA Now!, a coalition dedicated to building public support for supervised consumption sites and other life-saving harm reduction efforts. Whether on the ground working directly with impacted communities or in the Massachusetts State House advocating for progressive health policies that center those most vulnerable, Aubri was committed to saving lives.

On Thursday, June 11th, our community lost a true activist leader, table shaker and accomplice in the fight for health care justice. Aubri will be missed dearly, but her legacy lives on in the policy she helped to create, in the hearts of her fellow activists, and in the minds of policy makers who she engaged and enlightened.

Madam Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing the life of Aubri Esters and her contributions to the Massachusetts 7th Congressional District. We remember Aubri with tremendous gratitude for her life-saving advocacy. May she forever rest in power.

#### HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF THERESA CARRANO ARGENTO

##### HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Ms. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, it is with the heaviest of hearts that I rise today to pay tribute to the life and legacy of one of the pillars of New Haven's Italian-American community and my dear friend, Theresa Carrano Argento. She lived a long, full life and our community will not be the same without her.

One of six children, Theresa grew up in the Wooster Square neighborhood of New Haven. Her father owned a "specialty market," selling imported fruit from California—pears, oranges, and cherries, all individually wrapped in color-coded paper. Her mother was an immigrant from Italy. When the stock market crashed, her father nearly lost the store. Instead of folding as so many others had, her father found work, as did she and her siblings, and her mother was left to run the family business. It

was from these early life lessons that Theresa learned the true strength of family and community.

Theresa dedicated most of her adult life to preserving and celebrating the community and its members' shared Italian heritage. She was a founding member of the Saint Andrew's Ladies Auxiliary, the women's branch of one of New Haven's Italian-American Societies and an organization she led for decades before stepping down only a few short years ago. She was also a dedicated communicant of St. Michael's Church, Connecticut's oldest Italian church, organizing and supporting fundraisers and even serving as its bookkeeper for a time. She worked to revive the Columbus Day celebration in New Haven and was a constant presence at Wooster Square's annual Cherry Blossom Festival. She was a member, and often served in the leadership, of most of the Italian-American clubs and organizations in the community. Theresa understood the importance of preserving and sharing that culture and those traditions with new generations. She was, in a word, remarkable.

Theresa was a matriarch in the Wooster Square community, much like my own mother, Luisa. They were, in fact, great friends and it was a friendship that remained strong until my mother's passing just two years ago. Both Theresa and my mother were forces of nature in their own rights, and when they got together, there was no stopping them. It was at their feet that I learned the importance of community and it is on their shoulders that I stand today. I would not be who I am today without their influence so I will be forever grateful for their guidance and support.

Theresa was an extraordinary friend, mentor, and community leader. I like so many others consider myself fortunate to have known her. She was so much more than a friend—she was family. I am heartbroken at her loss, but I know her memory will live on. I extend my deepest sympathies to Theresa's daughters, Nettie and Francis, as well as her four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Throughout her life, she touched the lives of many and hers is a legacy that will continue to inspire both those who knew her and generations to come.

#### HONORING TOMMI PRITCHETT AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR PRIDE MONTH

##### HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, Tommi Pritchett currently serves as the Director of Development and Kissimmee Program Manager for LGBTQ+ Center Orlando, Incorporated. She is a native of Central Florida, earned her Bachelor of Arts in English at Rollins College, and has received several certificates from the Edyth Bush Institute for Philanthropy and Non-profit Leadership.

Her journey in public service began in 2010 when she volunteered for a local non-profit organization's booth at the Gay Days Expo. She continued as a volunteer with Paws Care for two years as their marketing and events coordinator; to which she attributes her love of

event planning and fundraising. She went on to volunteer and then work for Orlando Fringe, the longest running Fringe festival in the United States, and transitioned to the LGBTQ+ Center in August 2018.

In addition to animals and the LGBTQ+ community, Tommi advocates for the arts, women, and BIPOC, among other underserved and underprivileged communities. She is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals Central Florida Chapter and serves on the board of directors for LoveyLoaves Special Needs Rescue and Sanctuary. She is honored to be recognized as an LGBTQ+ Community Leader in Central Florida and is proud to serve such a diverse and deserving community. She owes much of her success to the mentors she has had along her professional journey, as well as the staff, board, and volunteers at The Center, her family and friends, and the great community leaders she feels privileged to work alongside. When she is not busy with her leadership and advocacy responsibilities, she enjoys spending time with her family, dogs, and recently discovered a passion for hydroponic gardening.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF SAINT PAUL PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD CHAIR MARNY XIONG

##### HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 18, 2020

Ms. McCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the life of Ms. Marny Xiong, Chairwoman of the Saint Paul Public Schools Board of Education who passed away from COVID-19 at the age of 31 on Sunday, June 7, 2020. Ms. Xiong was a trailblazing young activist, community leader, and a dedicated advocate for young people and strong public schools. Gender equity and racial justice were the core values that defined her public service.

After receiving her bachelor's degree in political science and African and African-American studies, Ms. Xiong began working in the local nonprofit community. In 2017 she was elected to the Saint Paul Public Schools Board of Education, demonstrating strong advocacy to improve our public schools. She played an important role in building support necessary to pass a bond referendum in 2018 that directed needed additional funding to Saint Paul schools.

When Ms. Xiong became Chairwoman of the Board in January of this year, her leadership abilities became evident as she confronted dual crises of the district's first ever teachers' strike and the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Xiong worked respectfully and collaboratively with Superintendent Joe Gothard and labor leaders to reach a successful resolution to the strike in early March. Only a short time later, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, she helped to steer the district's unprecedented transition to distance learning for more than 37,000 students. It is heartbreaking that this pandemic has now taken one of our community's rising leaders.

Ms. Xiong is survived by her parents, Mr. Zahoua Xiong and See Xiong, and her seven siblings: two sisters and five brothers, as well as two brothers-in-law, a sister-in-law, four nieces and nephews. Marny will be remembered as a caring community organizer, a